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ABSTRACT

The school improvement process of the Springfield (Massachusetts) Public School System is offered as a model for school reform. The efforts in Springfield began from the premise that institutions do not reform themselves, and that pressure from the outside, enough to be noticed, but not enough to disrupt, was necessary to spur reform. The work in Springfield began by bringing the needs of the schools to the total community. A "Blueprint for Excellence" was prepared to show the system's needs. School-based management teams were implemented and the model of involvement of all constituencies that these teams represented was replicated outside the individual schools through district task forces on school and administrative organization, school effectiveness, and curriculum change. The media was enlisted to bring issues before the public, to help the system in the desired organizational, pedagogical, social and attitudinal, and political transformations. Children do not come to school the same way, but it is the response of the system to how they come that makes the difference. The Springfield district has begun to bring about these transformations, and is moving forward with a spirit that sees these changes as possible. (SLD)

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The Transformation of America's Public Schools: A Community's Struggle to Fulfill the Vision

by

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

The challenge of public education before all of us in this country is clear. We must work towards full educational access and equity for all children. We began this work in Springfield, Massachusetts, in September, 1989, by bringing together all the constituencies in the development and support of the school improvement process. Our work is offered as a model for school reform.

Our premise in Springfield was different than most of the reform efforts in the country. We began understanding that institutions do not reform themselves and that for significant reform and change to take place we needed the system to feel pressure from the outside. This pressure had to be such that it did not upset the inside so much that it would respond negatively and become immobile. This is, indeed, a delicate balancing act.

While the Springfield reform effort of the last three years has not been without tension between the inside and outside constituencies, it has been reasonable enough that it continues to have broad support from all the constituencies. In our estimation, it is impossible to sustain any reform effort that does not recognize the full interdependence of schooling and community. In addition, the reform process must bring all of the constituencies together, understanding and recognizing each of their self-interests in the development and implementation of a common purpose.

Basic to our work in Springfield and the struggle of transforming America's public schools into places that educate effectively all children, we must embrace the belief that all children can and will learn. This belief must be accompanied by a recognition that the students of the past—mostly white and middle class—are not the students of today or of our future. Children will continue to come to school in the next decade as they are today, increasingly brown and black, certainly poorer and more than likely not ready for school. These are the children all of us will be responsible for effectively and appropriately educating. These are the children we must prepare for an increasingly complex 21st century.

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The job before us is a difficult one. Poor children are indeed more difficult to educate than middle class children. However, when and where a community decides to transform its schools into effective ones that work for all children, it has and will continue to happen. The proof is in the success of hundreds of schools in America. *This is the new paradigm: to teach children to the best of our potential and not to the best of their potential* as has been the case in America's public schools.

In order to get different results, schools must change what they are doing. What we do in response to how children come to school and not how they come makes the difference. Educators and schools must make the difference. The need for change, however, cannot be viewed as personal failure. Change merely responds to new conditions and information. The fact that change is necessary cannot be interpreted as blaming educators, parents and certainly not children for our problems. Parents send the schools the very best children they have; they do not keep the good ones at home. Thse are the only children we have and the ones we will have to depend on to have this great democracy flourish. We must begin as a nation to concentrate on solutions with an understanding of our past to provide the context for what we do in education and our needs for the future.

A major reason for the condition of public schools today is steeped in the history of the independence of schooling. Schools were set up on the hill separate and apart from the community—totally isolated. It was the job of the educator—the expert—to teach the children and we would do it by ourselves independent of everyone else. After all, we were the experts and we needed no one's help. Today, we see the results of that thinking.

We in America have not made the connection between an effective quality of life in a community and the quality of public schooling in a community. We have not recognized the complete and total interdependence of community, schooling and democracy. We are virtually alone and unsupported by the public. We cannot be successful until the workers in the public schools and the total community understand the interdependence. Of course, this is further complicated because 75% of the American public does not have children in the public schools. The seniors and the childless families all ask, "What's in school reform for me?" Underlying much opposition to public school support is the following question: "Why should we pay to educate these children who don't even look like us?" Educators must help these groups to understand the inter-relationship of effective schools and effective, productive communities.

The salvation of our public schools has meaning for all people. In the transformational process, three compelling reasons for change must be addressed:

1. Society is changing.
2. The expectations of results are changing.

3. The client group (our students) is changing.

All that is presented is at the very core of the reform effort in Springfield, a community that is truly a microcosm of America. What has been true in Springfield, a school community which is 2/3 minority and 1/2 at poverty level, is true or will be true of most communities in America by the year 2000.

The work in Springfield initially sought to bring the needs of the schools to the total community. Substantive involvement was sought at all levels from all the constituencies. Springfield accepted this challenge and opportunity. We became involved in a process that included all the transformations simultaneously and established the major beliefs to set the direction of the school system:

- Systemic change is essential to be responsive to all of the needs.
- Every child can and will learn.
- All the constituencies must be involved in the schools.
- Teaching for learning prepares students for a changing and complex world.
- Student performance determines success or failure and guides the direction of reform.

These beliefs were first articulated in the *Blueprint for Excellence*, the document that was prepared by administrators with input from various constituencies to set the direction of the school system in the school improvement process. This framework articulated the system's mission and vision and established guidelines for the implementation of school based management teams and for greater involvement by all the constituencies.

School based management teams were introduced and implemented in all 40 schools during the first year of the reform effort. Composed of the principal, teachers, parents, a community person, a business person, a central office administrator, and students at the secondary level, these teams set to work on establishing their school's vision, mission and goals based on the system's vision. Three years after this introduction, the school centered decision making process was defined and incorporated in the teachers' contract.

The model of involvement of all the constituencies was replicated outside the individual schools. The reform plan, Phase I: The Policy of Inclusion, included the establishment of task forces on the major issues affecting our system: School Organization, Central Office Organization, Effective Schools, and Curriculum for the 21st Century. The recommendations of the Task Forces directed the organizational transformation that followed in the subsequent year:

- reorganization of grades to create K-5, K-8, middle schools with grades 6-8, and four year high schools with grades 9-12;

- reorganization of the central office administration through consolidation of services, implementation of a computer information system for comprehensive student data, scheduling, student assignment and transportation, and other support services;
- activities and alternative teaching strategies to affect the school environment;
- additional alternative programs to meet student needs, including the Education Alternative Program (EAP), an Assessment Center, the Middle College Program, Anti-Violence Initiatives, Mediation and Conflict Resolution programs, and an alternative program for older students (16+) at the Massachusetts Career Development Institute;
- curriculum revision to include multicultural infusion, a repertoire of teaching strategies, and use of technology as an instructional tool.

To reach out to bring the total community into the schools, new initiatives were introduced and existing initiatives were expanded. Accessibility to the Superintendent was a major goal. The Superintendent was the spokesperson for the vision of the system. An open door policy was established encouraging access beyond hierarchal lines, accepting speaking engagements and any opportunity to deliver the system's message that all children can and will learn given appropriate resources and instruction. On Sunday afternoons, the Superintendent's Roundtable brought together 15-30 people to discuss school issues in two-hour sessions that were open to anyone in the school community as well as interested Springfield citizens. On a more personal level, parents, students, teachers, community members, could expect a telephone call from the Superintendent as well as time at the office. No concern was considered inappropriate. The Superintendent's personal involvement legitimized the belief that each individual has a stake in the public schools and that the schools must be responsive to each individual.

With access comes greater involvement. Organized groups were encouraged to form and establish their common goal with the school system to better the education of the children. In this first year of school improvement, formal partnerships were established with the business community, with parents, with social service agencies and organizations. Each of the 40 schools developed a relationship with a business partner that assists in providing mentors, attendance incentives, and other support projects. With the support and assistance of the Superintendent, the Springfield Parent Advisory Network, composed of PTO presidents and representatives from all schools, established by-laws and became officially recognized by the School Committee as the representative of parents. A new subcommittee of the School Committee was created for parent concerns. This recognition in the formal organization of the school system established the role of parents in the educational process. All of the subcommittees of the School Committee became more involved since more issues

were sent to the subcommittees for recommendations on action to be taken. This type of involvement allowed for School Committee members to investigate all issues and to take ownership of the ultimate recommendations from the Superintendent. During the next reform phases, the policy of inclusion expanded to frame formal partnerships with the religious community. An Education Summit on May 28, 1992, brought together over750 individuals from all constituencies in the community to examine, discuss and develop a community action plan for involvement and support to share concerns about the schools and to devise action plans for involvement and support. A Parent Information Center was developed and expanded over the past two years to provide school registration services as well as information on schools, programs, and services. All the changes that have occurred in Springfield have been possible as a result of the support of the School Committee, the parents, the teachers and administrators, the business community, and the various support organizations.

To maximize the opportunity to deliver the message of the school system, the Superintendent was visible through the media, both in School Department produced programs and the commercial media. "Focus on Springfield Schools," a 30- minute cable television weekly program on the school system, features the Superintendent as host with two or three guests discussing school issues, programs, or activities. Public Service Announcements for radio and television presented important issues and school activities; radio and television talk shows often featured the Superintendent and the changes in Springfield; public hearings on acquisition of land for a new school were televised and had capability for questions to be telephoned in; newsletters on the *Blueprint for Excellence* and the many initiatives were produced regularly for the schools.

The media community accepts the belief that the schools belong to the community and that the involvement of each is essential. The local major newspaper has had a long commitment to educational issues and for years has assigned one reporter to cover the School Department. New columns devoted to school information have been introduced and a new series on Mondays focuses on special events, schools, or individuals in the system. A Marketing Committee, composed of media executives and School Department personnel, was formed in the second year of the reform, and led to greater involvement and support of the various media. A local television station has assisted in preparing public service announcements, animating a cartoon character who is seen as a champion for education, and, in addition, has invited our high school television production class to produce a 30 minute monthly show to be broadcast on their channel. Other television stations and radio stations have assisted us in communicating our message through the broadcast of public service announcements and special programs. Billboards, with space donated by local companies, have gone up in Springfield with an education message directed to parents. "If you love learning, so will your

children" is seen throughout the city and was featured on the sides of a school bus in the Springfield Thanksgiving Day Balloon Parade. Graphic designs for the billboards and for school system publications are donated by a graphics company. The Annual Report, a new initiative, which began after the first year of the reform efforts, has been published by area businesses at no cost to the school system.

The most significant change to ensure parental involvement and school reform that was implemented in Springfield was a Schools of Choice Plan. This intradistrict plan complies with the state court ordered desegregation plan, and allows parents to select a school in Springfield within an education zone or from citywide or zone magnet schools. Applying controlled choice to the student assignments, the system is able to control class size at individual schools and grade levels and can maintain a racially balanced system. This plan was presented to the community in public hearings and neighborhood meetings prior to the unanimous adoption by the School Committee and approval of the Massachusetts Board of Education in December of 1991. The first School Fair, which launched the school application period, brought 10,000 people to view the displays of each school, and speak with staff members. The School Fair continues to be an integral part of the school choice process.

When we began our reform efforts, we believed that four transformations had to take place:

1. **Organizational Transformation**
2. **Pedagogical Transformation**
3. **Social and Attitudinal Transformation**
4. **Political Transformation.**

We also believed that these four transformations had to take place simultaneously and be part of a systemic effort that involved all of the constituencies. Thus, all of the phases of change were carefully crafted around these transformations. What follows is a brief description of each of the four basic transformations, which are viewed as necessary for America's schools to work in a 21st century globally competitive marketplace, and the application of these transformations in our reform efforts.

Organizational Transformation

In challenging what we are doing in schools, we must challenge what we believe about teaching and learning and what we have been doing for over 200 years in our schools. "Is the present organizational model used in public schooling an effective one?" The following are some traits we find in current school organizations that require review:

- 180 school day calendar
- 9 to 3 school day
- age-grade grouping

- subject concentration in secondary schools
- restrictive scheduling practices that facilitate tracking
- 45-minute periods
- no built-in time for staff interaction, staff development, school improvement
- no built-in time for working with parents and/or other agencies
- Carnegie unit completion rather than performance as the basis for measuring success
- retention as a solution for failure
- lecture as the main delivery strategy
- one teacher for twenty to thirty students in an individual classroom
- teachers working independent of each other
- top down governance structure—command and control as an organizational strategy
- instruction organized around the principle of remediation
- children in rows and in lines one behind the other
- little school or program choice on the part of teacher, student or parent
- acceleration as the exception
- tracking as an organizational strategy
- schools organized around covering the content or material not around having the children learn the material.

These organizational structures can no longer be supported. To expect a change in student outcomes, we must begin immediately the organizational transformation of our schools. Each one of these organizational structures or devices has a very good reason for its inception, but none of them is effective to meet the needs of a 21st century world. We, the educators of America have found it very difficult to discard that which is no longer relevant and necessary. We cling to the old because it is comfortable; however, we can no longer continue to insist that we can make work for our schools a structure that is outdated and outmoded. If the Iron Curtain could come tumbling down as quickly as it did, there is hope that the present organizational structure of schools could undergo dramatic change.

Our schools are presently organized around an industrial model rather than an informational model. Schools persist in aiming to produce young people that are capable of working in isolation and taking direction, to produce young people who can relate to machines and not to other people. Schools rooted in the past attempt to extinguish the natural desire of people to gather, to be inquisitive and to interact. Learning can no longer be viewed as a private psychological matter. The new world requires a total transformation of the organizational structure of schools.

Collective bargaining contracts with our teachers and administrators must reflect the new organizational structure. The school day can no longer be limited to six hours nor can the school year end after 180 days. If time is needed to plan, to confer with students and parents, to attend professional development programs, that time must not come at the expense of instructional time, which is already at a minimum. The Springfield teachers' contract ratified in December, 1992, adds 15 minutes each day for instruction as well as 75 minutes once a week for planning, professional development, parental conferences, and seven days without students for professional development. Educators cannot do more in the same amount of time nor do we want to. Learning for both the adult and child requires time—time for exploration, for understanding, for discovery, for mastery.

Schools must move to become places where the organizational structure and the pedagogical models stress the importance of producing students who have a repertoire of skills for the new world:

- higher thinking skills
- ability to frame new ideas and solve problems
- ability to access information
- creative thinking
- ability to conceptualize
- adaptability to change
- human relations skills
- ability to work in a team atmosphere
- ability to re-learn
- oral communication skills
- negotiation skills, ability to reach consensus and resolve conflicts
- goal setting, motivation, know-how to get things done
- self assured and task committed
- leadership, ability to assume responsibility and motivate co-workers.

To achieve these skills, we must transform the organizational norm to one that recognizes and supports people who are able to work together and collaborate on problem identification, analysis and inquiry, and solutions. Since the needs of the students must become the focus of the organizational structure, the following need examination and adjustment:

- the present use of time in the structure
- the present practices of grade levels
- scheduling
- time devoted to specific subject areas

- the relationship between subject areas
- content coverage
- length of school day and school year
- available course offerings.

Pedagogical Transformation

Pedagogy and organizational structure are interwoven and are separately addressed only to emphasize that both must take place. One cannot simply rearrange the chairs in a classroom into a circle and proclaim that this will help instruction. In America's public schools, we have historically asked children to sit one behind the other and told them to be still, to be quiet and never to talk to each other. If all we do is put them in a circle and tell them to be still, be quiet and never talk to each other, we have done little to change the results.

A growing body of evidence indicates that present instructional delivery models cannot survive if we are to meet the needs of a 21st century world. The required changes are not the traditional or faddish changes in methods and approaches. They are based on physiological evidence that recognizes the very complex functioning of the human brain. Research and experience have established that different people learn in different ways and that educators, as the engineers of learning, are capable of adapting our teaching styles to the learning styles of children. Only one tenth of what we already know is currently being used and the research continues to explode before us. The new knowledge will require us to adjust our pedagogy. *The new paradigm is that individuals learn in different ways and that success can be measured in a variety of ways.*

Pedagogical transformation is a revolution not an evolution. It is not a new method or approach. It shatters the very essence of what we have believed for years. And it will not come about as a result of legislation from the federal or state government that imposes new or greater standards or new regulations. It will also be stymied if we try to remediate to undo what has been done. Pedagogical transformation requires the liberation of the American educator, the liberation from the past and from the security that comes from doing the known and comfortable.

Pedagogical transformation can happen only in conjunction with organizational transformation. Children will require more time in school, but not more time doing the same. If children are not to be exposed to the same procedure and content, teachers will also have to act differently. This pedagogical transformation will not come easily and will require enormous effort on the part of teachers. Teachers and principals will have to work longer days and longer years where they have ample time to interact, plan and learn. The changes in working conditions require that teachers be

appropriately compensated. Educational leaders must provide support as teachers apply what they know about the learning process. If all constituencies understand that the social, attitudinal and political transformations must take place at the same time, unions will not be an impediment.

Pedagogical transformation must address what we teach, how we teach, and how we measure what the students have learned. Since the expectation for results has dramatically changed in the last ten years, the American public schools are now expected to be successful with all of the children. This is the first time in the history of public education that we are expected to equally educate all of the children. Heretofore, the role of the American public school was to sort and select, to decide who would go to college and who would enter the world of work. Today, the new requirement of the school is to provide an effective and appropriate education for all children no matter how they come to school. Our new vision that all children be successful has caught unexpectedly the public schools of America. *This shift of responsibility to the school is an important if not critical shift in perspective.* This means that public school educators cannot point to the children and say that some children come with so many problems that we cannot educate them; it means that we have to recognize the problems and issues confronting children and plan how we will solve those problems so that everyone can be educated effectively and appropriately.

If we accept this new requirement for schools, we must recognize that the present pedagogical models are not acceptable. Any student drop out rate is an indicator of a failed system. When the rate over four high school years, like in Springfield, reaches 40% or even 60% among Hispanics, the drop out rate screams at us that the practices of the past are not successful today. We must combine what we are learning about teaching and learning with changes in organizational structure to meet this new requirement of teaching all children.

To teach all children implies that administrators and teachers undergo enormous changes in the skills and knowledge they possess today. A new discussion around the responsibility of teachers and administrators to acquire new knowledge and skills is essential. Both management and teachers have a responsibility to change. Teachers must recognize that the skills and information they brought to teaching are no longer adequate. They must participate in staff development programs to expand their repertoire of instructional strategies necessary to be successful with all children. Training and support for teachers to acquire these new skills are critical to pedagogical transformation.

In addition to conventional components in professional and curriculum development programs, the Springfield Public Schools has entered into long term relationships with several major institutions around the issues of educators' belief systems about learning, appropriate teaching strategies, more authentic and performance based assessment, and identified learning outcomes as evidence of the quality of the educational endeavor.

All teachers and administrators are participating in professional development workshops conducted by the Efficacy Institute of Lexington, Massachusetts. The basic premise of this work is that intelligence is developmental and not given at birth. *In the new paradigm, effort and development lead to success and not innate ability.* This developmental approach supports the belief that all students can learn high quality curriculum. Moreover, all children have the right to study high levels of mathematics, science, foreign language, and English literacy skills.

This belief system has lead us to a second collaboration with Research for Better Teaching in Carlisle, Massachusetts. Our teachers and administrators are involved in workshops which focus on understanding the teaching repertoires which all teachers need to know and use. Teachers and administrators are learning more about teaching and administering schools as instructional specialists engaged in a collegial endeavor. This collaboration will help teachers and administrators work together in a systemic way to improve instruction.

A changed belief system and a new approach to instruction lead naturally to a discussion about more innovative assessment practices. We are now engaged in a long term effort with the Educational Testing Service to develop "big idea" learning outcomes for which we are developing authentic, performance based curriculum assessment activities for the spring of 1993. Foreign language teachers will administer oral interviews to a sample of level 1 French, Spanish, and Chinese language students to gather data about student ability to perform identified speaking tasks. English teachers will administer a writing sample and a literature based assessment to measure the achievement of curricular goals. Mathematics and science teachers will pilot some interdisciplinary and subject area specific tasks at identified grades between K-12. These are but a sampling of assessment projects in progress.

All of these previous efforts are contingent upon the identification of agreed upon K-12 learning outcomes for the system. The individual grade level and subject area outcomes must be developed to help students reach the agreed upon end point. We are now working to establish such outcomes and to build consensus about how to reach them.

Another major component of the pedagogical transformation is the integration of technology in our teaching and learning process. In Springfield, we are using technology to support our ongoing reform effort which reflects a philosophy of access to equity and academic excellence for all students. Springfield will utilize technology in three major areas:

- as a tool in the delivery of a high quality core curriculum
- as a tool in the management of school information
- as a subject area in the curriculum.

Technology includes computers and computer networks, VCR's and videos, large screen projection devices, hand-held video cameras and studio video production, and satellite links. Students must be able to access information and analyze data in meaningful ways. Technology provides new techniques for access and new power for analysis. Students can access courses through distance learning, use worldwide library resources, and share information through international computer networks. Students can connect to the educational setting from their homes, from libraries, and other support service locations. Students can participate in educational programs in non-traditional settings and in non-traditional time frames.

As a new and developing tool, technology must also be learned and mastered by educators. Currently, in Springfield, we have experimented with a variety of technologies; we have taught technology in business and vocational settings; we have computer assisted learning stations for academic reinforcement, microcomputer labs using languages, such as LOGO, as well as computer simulations and commercial software to support academic instruction. Middle schools have computer labs which are used in the writing process and which also provide instructional support in other subject areas. High school computer labs are used to teach computer applications, computer languages, word processing, and computer aided design. Television production is available in mini-lessons at various schools and in a sequential program of studies at the high school level with access to a broadcast studio. The goal is to have these technologies available to all students at all schools.

By enlisting technology, the reform movement can be supported. This inclusion can best be accomplished by working with community resources, such as the area library and museums, and business partners. Springfield is currently involved in a partnership with the MITRE Corporation, a non-profit company devoted to the study of the use of technology and the design of information systems. Focusing on education, MITRE and the Springfield Public Schools have joined to explore the use of technology in K-12 education and to support instruction that incorporates technology. In addition, they are helping to create a computer based curriculum management and assessment tool. Together, we can strengthen our educational system to truly prepare our students for the information age.

Recognizing the pedagogical needs in Springfield, professional development—even at a time when financial resources are rapidly diminishing—becomes of paramount importance. Available funds were devoted to providing teachers with a repertoire of instructional strategies. Since after school workshops required additional payment and since all staff members needed to embrace the same vision and information, six half-days were petitioned and granted by the Massachusetts Department of Education to hold release professional development programs. Federal and state grants were aggressively sought. When any additional grant funds were available, they were used

for professional development. Teachers were encouraged to visit other classrooms both within their school buildings and at other schools. All this support would lead to providing varied strategies, but equally as important, to open communication and exchange of ideas among teachers, who often work in isolation. This process must continue, for each educator must be continually open to new developments in education, but above all, must be open to trying something new in search of the best method for each child. A climate must be established that supports educators to take risks.

Social and Attitudinal Transformation

The social and attitudinal transformation requires everyone in the community to understand fully the interdependence of school and community. *One cannot have an effective quality of life in any community without effective public schools.* Each school district must form broad alliances with the following constituencies and communities:

- parents
- business members
- religious leaders
- human service providers
- community agencies
- senior citizens.

Broad alliances are difficult and require major changes in social attitudes. As a nation, we have not believed that schools should work as part of a larger and interdependent society. In fact, we have attempted to keep these structures in the community separate. Recently, we recognized the need to work with the entire community if we are to educate successfully all children. This social and attitudinal transformation requires us to develop child-centered communities.

As America moves from an industrial to an information society, major changes in social attitudes are required. During the industrial society, America had a very defined set of expectations for the distribution of results. Society, then, was controlled by a few at the top—usually white males—with most people in the middle working and taking direction. Society took care of a small group at the bottom, a group that was viewed as throw away people.

As we moved into the information society, we recognized the need for us to change our expectation of the results. Every individual must be a successful contributor to the economy.

Equity is the single most critical issue in education today. Does every child born in America have equal access to an effective and appropriate education? Our present system is such that children who are born poor will more than likely receive an inferior education. The research is clear in support

of the implementation of early childhood programs that provide a firm foundation for continued development and academic achievement. The changes in society and the workplace indicate that the worker of tomorrow must be capable in many skill areas and must have higher thinking ability. Beginning earlier and providing a continuum of educational opportunities will address these new challenges.

Present conditions are moving us from a moral imperative to educate all to an economic imperative to educate all. American business is facing a most critical challenge in the coming century. The work demands of the future underscore the need for rapid systemic change in American education:

- American industry will develop 16 million new jobs by the early 21st century; however, there will be only 14 million people to fill these jobs.
- Of these 14 million new entrants into the workplace, a majority will be female and/or minority, a group that historically has been underprepared. A country that already will have a shortage of 2 million workers cannot also cope with workers who are at risk employees and not capable of productively entering the job market.
- In addition, a majority of these 16 million new jobs will require skills far beyond those we expect of entrants into the work force today. It is estimated that 50% of these new jobs will require a college degree; 75% will require at least two years of college.

Although American industry today is spending between 30 and 40 billion dollars on training efforts for their employees, this investment is not enough. The schools must produce a new kind of worker for the 21st century, a worker with a new literacy and ability to relearn and be adaptable. Today's first graders will probably change jobs from 6 to 9 times during their lifetime. Up to 51 million may need retraining in the next 15 years: 21 million new entrants plus 30 million current workers.

America needs every citizen to be a productive and contributing member of society. People who were traditionally not expected to succeed must now succeed if our economy is to survive. This requires a complete social and attitudinal transformation on the part of our society and more specifically our teachers. *Again, the challenge has now become not teaching students to the best of their potential, but teaching students to the best of our potential.* This new paradigm indicates that it is what we do in the schools in response to how the children come to school that makes the difference and not how they come to school. This transformation is possibly the most challenging and the most difficult for the American public school to make. This means that teachers, administrators, parents and even students must totally change their perspective. They must discard the notion of school as

we understand it today and create new institutions with new visions. this is, indeed, difficult for all of us.

This challenge is compounded by the fact that schools are expected to teach more to more children. This difficult task has not been accomplished in any other society to date. Our task is made more difficult because ours is a heterogeneous and pluralistic society unlike any other in the world. Our country is made up of different races and cultures and language groups with different values and perspectives on life. And yet, this difference, the diversity of our people, may be our greatest asset.

Our country and our schools have struggled with our multicultural and diverse nature and have attempted to view our differences as part of our strength. As of yet, we have not been fully successful in using the diversity of our nation as the asset it can be. In education, we have developed multicultural and diversity units of instruction as a solution, however, with limited success in great part because the approach has been fragmented. Inclusion, a new approach, is being implemented in Springfield as well as in other school systems.

Through inclusion models, teachers work cooperatively with all children. Current research indicates that students learn a great deal from each other and that differences in children when handled appropriately by the teacher are assets in improving the teaching and learning process. The trend in American education had been to create as homogeneous a learning environment as possible. This led to the separation of children who were different and created a very fragmented and exclusive instructional process in America's schools. Current research, however, has led to a new examination of exclusionary practices in our schools. This new model for instruction has taken hold as "inclusion" and is being piloted all across the country. Springfield has become one of five pilot districts in Massachusetts to implement inclusionary models and as such has dozens of programs that are inclusionary. Inclusion has also led us in Springfield to implement two-way bilingual programs that allow English speaking students to learn a new language, Spanish or Russian, and Hispanic or Russian students learn English. This approach has great promise and is predicated in part on the four transformations.

Political Transformation

This area of transformation has several components and includes political change within the school construct as well as in government and society in general. First, it is important that we recognize that we live in a society that has had a strong middle class as its underpinning. Based on the national birth rate, which indicates that the middle class is having about 1.5 children per marriage, the natural replenishment of the middle class is not taking place. By comparison, the birth rate for poor people is exploding.

The political question here surrounds the will of this country to educate those who traditionally have been ignored. Will American society understand the political and economic repercussions and implications of not educating its poor? Will American society support public education in urban centers when the people being educated do not resemble both in class and color the people controlling the economy of those urban centers?

The additional fundamental issue of equity and excellence must also be addressed within the political context. At present, where a child is born will determine to a great extent the quality of the child's education. There are communities in this country that spend $1,200 per child for education while others spend as high as $14,000 per child. While the issue is not money alone, an inherent political inequality in this funding approach is clear. The federal government must play a more intensive role in the funding of American public education. The link between our economic survival as a nation and education has been clearly defined. We are at the crossroads of choosing to pay adequately for the education of all children regardless of where they live, the color of their skin, or the language they speak or of choosing not to pay, and losing our democracy.

Appropriate and sufficient funding is crucial to any educational reform. In Springfield, in 1990 at the end of the first year of the school improvement process, a campaign was launched to override the tax limiting Proposition 2 1/2 in Massachusetts. The successful override brought an additional $3,400,000 to the city for the School Department budget. The success of this campaign—the only one in the state to support education—indicated the public support for the public schools. During 1991-1992, the Massachusetts legislature formed committees which included public school educators and the Springfield Superintendent of Schools to develop school reform legislation. Today, efforts still continue for the total reform package, but the state legislature did add funds for education, which resulted in an additional $20,000,000 in the Equal Education Opportunity Grant for Springfield for 1992-1993.

Massachusetts adopted a school choice plan which allows communities to decide if they wish to participate and which aims to create competition among schools, and, therefore, improve schools. The participating communities establish the number of students they will accept from other communities. The sending community pays the tuition for each child. Unfortunately, this legislation depletes the resources of the urban centers. Since all children from a sending community are eligible, the sending community is responsible for the tuition of even those students who previously were in a private or parochial school but who select to attend a public school in a participating community. To offset this inequity, the state has reimbursed sending communities a minimum of 50% of the tuition costs. But this program does not offset the inequity for individuals since there is no transportation allowance. Clearly, from Springfield's statistics, 94% of the 150 students attending

schools in neighboring communities are white and 54% are students who did not attend previously the public schools. The aim of this state choice plan will not be realized since its basic assumption is flawed. Parents and students don't necessarily select a school because of an excellent education program. Other issues govern the selection, including proximity to a school, previous attendance at a school, and race relations.

The final political transformation requires American public education and its governance to remain at the local level. All attempts to nationalize education are filled with danger. Local issues and local values contribute to the effective delivery of educational opportunity in the individual classroom.

The federal government, however, does have a role to play in setting broad standards around expectations of learning outcomes. We are the only country in the world that does not have national standards or expectations. Another role the government must play is in providing the broad research necessary to link instruction and assessment through the use of technology. Although there are thousands of school systems across the country duplicating efforts in the area, none of these districts have the resources to implement this needed transformation effectively. The federal government could complete such a project in conjunction with some of the major corporations in less than two years.

The four transformations can take place in America if we understand and accept the following precepts:

- Money is not the panacea, but without money we cannot accomplish our goals.
- Children do not come to school the same way; however, it is our response to how they come that makes the difference.
- Some children cost more to educate than others. It is in our best interest to educate them all.
- The present system of funding public education is inequitable and must be changed.
- The classroom and school is the unit of change and as such local governance must be promoted, encouraged, and maintained.
- The present model of education must be adjusted so that first time quality becomes the norm and not remediation.
- The relationship between the school, the home, and the community must be understood and internalized. Schools need to work with families and the community and the community needs the schools. They cannot exist independent of each other.

- Our curriculum must reflect our goals. What must be learned and how is it assessed are basic questions that must be posed.
- Technology must be viewed as the key to the future. We are not using even one-tenth of the power of technology. We must move from the chalkboard to the electronic board.
- The principle of organized abandonment must be learned. Abandon what has not worked for a long time.
- Our schools must be transformed from places where people are told what to do, to places where students, parents, teachers and administrators identify the issues and provide the solutions.
- Interdistrict choice as a school reform device must be used with great care lest we create new inequities for a segment of our population or as a divider of the haves and have nots.
- Ongoing staff development programs and support at the school level are needed.
- Additional time in the school day where teachers can plan together around the issues that confront them is essential. Schools must become the units of change where teachers see the interdependence of what they teach and how they work and support each other.
- Everyone in America must understand the interdependence of the quality of life in our community and the quality of our schools.

American public education has an awesome task. This awesome task has placed educators in what is possibly the greatest opportunity any one group of people has ever had in the history of America. America is poised for its greatest failure or its greatest success. America can become a nation of haves and will haves. The great American experiment called democracy cannot and will not survive without an educated populace. This country and each community face a great challenge. For educators, this is a great opportunity to realize equity through education. For our children, this is the only opportunity for realization of the American Dream in a thriving world economy.

We in Springfield believe we have begun the process for realizing the full transformation of our public schools. We are hardly done, but we have a strong beginning. We have impacted every constituency in our community. Although we still have many bridges to cross and issues to resolve, there is a new spirit that sees our vision as possible. We may not merit distinction at this moment, but we certainly do merit watching.